

COUNTERBALANCING TOPIC INTEREST WITH CELL QUOTAS AND INCENTIVES: EXAMINING LEVERAGE-SALIENCE THEORY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE *POETRY IN AMERICA* SURVEY

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Topic Interest, Cell Quotas, and Incentives

Leverage-salience theory suggests that interest in the topic is a key factor in people's willingness to participate in surveys. People for whom the topic is salient will cooperate at higher rates than those for whom it is not. Noncooperation by people who are not interested in the topic can result in nonignorable nonresponse (Groves et al. 2004). Groves and colleagues, in their test of the theory, found evidence that topic interest influenced rates of cooperation but did not affect survey results. We tested a number of hypotheses derived from leverage-salience theory using data from the *Poetry in America* study, a national random-digit dialing (RDD) survey of adult readers. The main topic—poetry—was assumed to be of interest only to a small subgroup of the population, and we implemented cell quotas and monetary incentives for reluctant respondents midway through the field period. We interviewed 623 people who read poetry currently, 394 who do not read poetry currently, and 87 who had never read poetry. We evaluated the influence of topic salience by looking at (1) cooperation rates at first contact with the respondents in each of these three groups; (2) cooperation rates after we began offering a monetary incentive; and (3) completion rates across types of respondents. We also analyzed the characteristics of nonrespondents who specifically mentioned the topic as the reason for refusal. Last, we examined the impact of level of topic interest on the survey data. Findings are discussed in terms of the counterbalancing effects of cell quotas and incentives on topic interest to enhance the representativeness of the data.

Keywords: Leverage salience theory, incentives

1. Introduction

The leverage-salience theory of survey participation (Groves et al. 2000) posits that when people are asked to participate in a survey, they assign importance to various aspects of the request. Most such requests include at least four elements that influence the decision to participate: the survey topic; the reputation of the organization conducting the research; the time needed to complete the survey; and the personal benefits of participation, usually in the form of incentive payments. Of these, the influence of the survey topic may lead to nonignorable nonresponse, because people with strong interest in the topic are likely to respond to key research questions differently from those with less interest (Groves et al. 2004).

Leverage-salience theory also predicts that overrepresentation of people with interest in the topic will be most pronounced when there are no other positive features to participation. In a series of experiments, Groves and colleagues (2004) found (1) that people are about 40 percent more likely to consent at first contact to participate in a survey when the topic is of interest; (2) that incentives dampen the effect of topic interest on participation by encouraging people who are influenced by personal gain; and (3) that the bias introduced by topic salience is a function of the relative size of the subpopulation interested in the topic and the degree to which the survey request highlights that topic.

In this paper, we explore the impact of topic interest on decisions to participate in the *Poetry in America* study, which NORC conducted on behalf of the Poetry Foundation. Estimates from the 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) indicate that about 14 percent of the adult population reads poetry over the course of one year (Bradshaw and Nichols 2004), which suggests that only a small subset of the population is interested in this topic.¹

2. Study Design

We tested a number of hypotheses derived from leverage-salience theory, using data from the *Poetry in America* study. The purpose of the study was to explore differences between poetry's current and potential audiences by gathering data about people's experiences with and attitudes toward poetry. The production goal was to complete 1,000 interviews with adult readers, with roughly half those interviews completed with the "current audience," defined as adult readers who had read poetry within the past five years. The potential audience included readers who had never read poetry or had not done so within the past five years.

¹ Estimates of participation with poetry range from 14 to 30 percent of the adult population, depending upon the survey design. For example, the 2002 SPPA was administered as a supplement to the Current Population Survey, an employment survey, using a stratified sample based on the decennial Census. In comparison, the 1997 SPPA found that 30 percent of the adult population read poetry. The 1997 SPPA was administered as a stand-alone survey using an RDD sample.

The study was *not* designed to counteract the effects of topic interest on survey participation. *Poetry in America* was designed to enable the Poetry Foundation, as well as other literary and cultural institutions, to understand the factors that lead people to appreciate poetry and the factors that might dissuade people from approaching it. To this end, it was important that people with varying levels of interest participate in the study.

Based on the SPPA estimates of poetry readership, the study was designed to minimize anticipated over-representation of potential audience members in the sample, and control costs associated with locating and contacting the roughly 14 percent of the population that would comprise the current audience group.² To that end, we expanded the time frame for current readership from the one year used in the SPPA to five years, thereby increasing the probability that sample members would screen in as poetry readers. We also implemented cell quotas that were expected to terminate interviews with potential audience members once we achieved 500 completed interviews with this group, and allow us to focus our resources on completing interviews with poetry readers.³

Before launching the survey, we conducted a small pretest using an RDD sample of 100 telephone numbers.⁴ The findings suggested that topic interest influenced decisions to participate in this study. Based on the SPPA data, we had expected to complete between 14 and 25 percent of the pretest interviews with current audience members. Our upper bound took into account that the proportion of the adult population who have read or listened to poetry in the past five years is likely to be larger than the proportion who have done so within the past year. Seventy-three percent of the pretest interviews were completed with poetry readers, 79 percent of whom reported that they had read or listened to poetry in the past year. Thus, even when we used the limited time frame as the inclusion criterion, we completed 58 percent of the interviews with current audience members.

In response to the pretest findings, we tried to minimize the salience of the topic by modifying the survey introduction. The original mentioned both the Poetry Foundation and poetry in the third sentence: “Hello, my name is _____. I’m calling from the University of Chicago. We are conducting a survey for the Poetry Foundation about people’s experiences with reading and poetry.” Our revised version emphasized “reading” over “poetry” and mentioned the study sponsor at the end of the third sentence: “Hello, my name is _____.

² In this report, we use the terms “current audience members” and “poetry readers” synonymously. People who listen to but do not read poetry are included in this group.

³ There were two cells: current audience members and potential audience members.

⁴ Over a two-week period, we completed 33 cases as part of this pretest.

*I’m calling from the University of Chicago. We are conducting research about reading on behalf of the Poetry Foundation.”*⁵

Data collection initially ran 10 weeks, from June to August 2005. Contrary to the assumptions used for production planning, interview completion with current audience members consistently outpaced completion with potential audience members. At the beginning of the fifth week of data collection, cell quotas for poetry readers were reached. All replicates introduced after the implementation of the quota system screened out poetry readers while continuing to interview people who did not read poetry, the potential audience. At the same time, an incentive plan was put into effect to ensure the timely completion of the study. Interviewers were instructed to offer the incentive to reluctant respondents, a group that could include soft or avoidant refusals from early replicates as well as new cases that seemed reluctant to participate when first contacted. Because incentive were usually offered at the introduction to the survey and before sample members screened into one of the sample strata, both current and potential audience members were paid the incentive (\$25 for completing the interview). The average interview lasted 40 minutes.

From September through October 2005, NORC conducted a second phase of data collection. Because systems issues affected the call scheduler, not all cases in phase I had been worked as thoroughly as planned. During the second phase of data collection, a subsample of cases from pre- and post-quota replicates was rereleased, and these cases were dialed for an additional four weeks. The outcome of phase II allowed NORC to make estimates about sample performance had all cases been finalized and provided an opportunity to boost production with potential audience members. The analyses reported here reflect the final outcomes across both phases of production. The final sample includes 623 interviews with current audience members and 400 with potential members.

We evaluated the degree of topic salience by segmenting the sample by presumed level of interest in poetry, determined by how recently respondents had read poetry. Use of this proxy resulted in four levels of interest: (1) high interest—people who had read poetry in the past year; (2) medium interest—people who had read poetry between 2 and 10 years ago, (3) low interest—people who had read poetry between 11 and 20 years ago; and (4) no interest—people who had never read poetry, who could not remember when they had last read poetry, or who had not read poetry in the past 20 years.

We examined the influence of topic salience by looking at differences among groups with respect to cooperation rates at first contact before and after we began offering a monetary incentive, as well as interview completion rates across types of

⁵ The revised introduction minimized the connection between the survey topic and poetry. However, the sponsor’s name makes it clear that the study is in some way connected with poetry.

respondents. Based on the work of Groves and colleagues (2004), we hypothesized that cooperation rates would be higher among those with more interest in poetry. We expected this tendency to be more pronounced during the first five weeks of production, prior to the introduction of monetary incentives. We further hypothesized that monetary incentives would serve as a stronger inducement to participation among sample members with little or no interest in the survey topic. As a result, we expected to see a greater change from pre- to post-incentive cooperation rates among the lower-interest groups. We expected that callbacks and interviewers' skill in gaining cooperation and converting refusals would result in minimal differences in interview completion rates across interest levels.

To explore potential nonresponse bias, we geocoded address information for respondents and nonrespondents and examined their characteristics by Census tract level. We conducted these analyses both for the overall sample and for a subgroup of sample members who specifically mentioned the topic as the reason for their refusal. Most refusals occurred during the introductory script.⁶ A large number also occurred at the consent screen, which announced the topic of the study explicitly to all sample members. For the analysis of "poetry refusals," we compared the characteristics of those who were successfully converted with those of people who remained nonrespondents. Last, we examined the impact of topic interest on the survey data.

3. Results

3.1 Distribution of Respondents Across Interest Levels

Of the 1,023 adult readers who participated in the *Poetry in America* study, 411 (40 percent) had read poetry in the past year and were categorized as "high interest." Twenty percent had read poetry within the past 10 years (medium interest), 12 percent within the past 20 years (low interest), and 28 percent had never read poetry, could not remember when they had last read poetry, or had read poetry more than 20 years ago (no interest).

3.2 Cooperation Rates⁷

There were no significant differences in pre- and post-incentive cooperation rates across interest levels. Overall, 36

⁶ When interviewers assigned a refusal status to a case, a pop-up appeared on their screen that asked whether the sample member mentioned poetry as the reason for refusing. All other reasons for refusing (e.g., no time, not interested) were recorded in call notes.

⁷ We used AAPOR Cooperation rate COOP3, which defines those unable to do the interview as also incapable of cooperating, and they are excluded from the base. Only completed interviews, and not partials, are included in the numerator.

percent of the sample members cooperated on first contact. As predicted by leverage salience theory, cooperation rates did increase with interest level and rose further when monetary incentives were introduced. Across all interest levels, incentives increased cooperation rates by 20 percent, from 25 percent at first contact prior to offering incentives to 45 percent at first contact post-incentive. However, instead of counterbalancing the effect of topic interest, monetary incentives had a greater impact on participation among sample members with high and medium levels of interest than among those with little or no interest in poetry. Cooperation rates among the high-interest group increased by 27 percent after we introduced a \$25 incentive. In comparison, post-incentive cooperation rates among the low- and no-interest groups increased by 6 percent and 10 percent respectively. Table 1 summarizes cooperation rates by interest level both before and after we introduced incentives.

Table 1. Cooperation Rates by Level of Topic Interest Pre- and Post-incentive (Unweighted)

Cooperation Rates Pre- and Post-incentive					
	High Interest	Medium Interest	Low Interest	No Interest	Total
Pre-incentive	28.3%	26.6%	25.3%	26.7%	24.5%
Post-incentive	55.4%	50.9%	31.6%	36.4%	44.6%
Total	43.3%	40.0%	28.9%	32.0%	35.5%

3.3 Interview Completion Rates

Leverage salience theory predicts that interviewer skills can minimize over-representation by people with high levels of interest. Interview completion rates for the *Poetry in America* study were generally quite high (over 90 percent, on average), and we found no statistically significant differences in interview completion rate across interest levels.

Table 2. Interview Completion Rates by Level of Topic Interest (Unweighted)

Interview Completion Rates Across Interest Levels	
Level of Interest	Percentage
High Interest	98.5
Medium Interest	95.7
Low Interest	89.6
No Interest	89.5

Nearly all high-interest respondents who began interviews completed them (98.5 percent). Interview completion rates among the low- and no-interest groups were just under 90 percent. These findings are particularly interesting given the differences in survey administration time across groups. On average, interviews with high-interest respondents took between 42 and 45 minutes to complete; interviews with

people who had never read poetry had an average administration time of 28 minutes. In general, it is believed that there is an inverse relationship between questionnaire length and interview completion rates (de Heer and Israels 1992; Botman and Thornberry 1992).

3.4 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents⁸

Consistent with the findings from the SPPA on literary readership, more women than men participated in the *Poetry in America* study. Using weighted data, 61 percent of our respondents are women, and 75 percent of the participants are white. In general, the broader class of readers included in the *Poetry in America* study is very similar to the literary readers who participated in the 2002 SPPA, with two exceptions: (1) the 2002 SPPA included significantly more white respondents than did *Poetry in America*, and (2) the SPPA included more adults with less than a high school education and fewer with graduate degrees.

We compared respondents with different levels of interest in poetry with respect to seven key demographic characteristics: gender, race, age, education, employment status, marital status, and income. We found significant differences for all characteristics except race and income. Significantly higher proportions of women, people with graduate degrees, and adults who have never married are among the high-interest poetry readers. In comparison, men, older adults, and people with less than a college degree fall into the no-interest group.

3.5 Demographic Characteristics of Nonrespondents

Evaluation of nonresponse bias requires comparable data for both respondents and nonrespondents. Therefore, we sent the telephone numbers for all cases that were still pending at the end of the field period through two locating services that match telephone numbers to addresses and provide the name of the person or business to whom the phone is listed. We also sent the phone numbers of the remaining pending cases to an automated service that dials the numbers and, based on the ring tone, flags each as working or non-working. We called working numbers to identify further any businesses or institutions, and then geocoded the addresses for all known residential telephone numbers, mapped these coordinates to their Census tracts, and obtained the associated Census tract-level demographic information. We also geocoded our respondents' addresses and obtained the same Census-tract-

⁸ We used weighted response data for this analysis because we are making comparisons with national estimates. All other analyses used unweighted response data. The first step in calculating the weights for survey data is to determine the base weight for each completed interview. Base weights are the reciprocal of the probability of selection. Each completed interview was then adjusted in a series of seven steps to represent more accurately the characteristics of the target population and to compensate for factors such as scope, eligibility, and nonresponse by cell

level demographic information for our respondents. We compared respondents and nonrespondents at the tract level with respect to age, gender, income, educational attainment, race, and ethnicity.

As Table 3 shows, with the exception of race and country of birth, the Census tracts of our respondents and our nonrespondents do not differ significantly from one another in terms of their demographic characteristics. While none of these comparisons were significantly different at the more robust $p < .01$ level, our analysis shows that respondent tracts had a higher percentage of white, non-Hispanic adults and significantly fewer foreign-born adults than did nonrespondent tracts. These findings are easily explained by our screening criteria. To be eligible for the *Poetry in America* study, the selected adult in the household had to read primarily in English. This language requirement made it likely that more non-Hispanics and fewer persons born outside the United States would be eligible.

Table 3. Tract-Level Comparisons: 12,236 Nonrespondents and 979 Respondents in the *Poetry in America* Survey (Unweighted)

Tract-Level Comparisons of Respondents and Nonrespondents		
Characteristic	Percentage of Nonrespondents	Percentage of Respondents
White, non-Hispanic*	73.5	76.4
African American	10.9	9.6
Asian	3.2	2.8
Graduate degree or higher	9.2	9.6
Foreign born*	9.6	7.9
Male	48.7	48.7
Female	51.3	51.3
Aged 65 and older	13.6	13.3
Median household income	\$46,466	\$46,849

* Chi-square significant at $p < .05$

Ninety-one people specifically named the topic of the study as their reason for refusing to participate. We successfully converted 25 of these "poetry refusals" (27 percent) and were able to compare their tract-level demographic characteristics with those of 66 other people who refused for the same reason and could not be persuaded to participate. We found no significant tract-level demographic differences between groups for any of the characteristics of interest.

3.6 Impact on Survey Estimates

We included both behavioral and opinion questions in our analyses of the impact of topic interest on survey estimates. First, we analyzed responses to four factual questions about poetry-related behaviors. We asked respondents (1) whether they had first read classic or contemporary poetry; (2) what sources they turned to for poetry—anthologies or collected works by individual poets; (3) whether and how they use the Internet for poetry-related information; and (4) whether they

purchased poetry for themselves or for other people within the past five years. Responses differed by interest level for all questions except for the percentage within each category who had first read the classics: it was 55 percent across all those who had ever read poetry.

Table 4 summarizes responses to the four questions we analyzed about poetry behaviors. As expected, people with greater interest in poetry are more likely to have read anthologies and collected works; to have used the Internet to find, read, or listen to poetry and to find information about poetry-related events; and to have purchased books of poetry within the past five years.

A similar pattern was found for responses to the opinion questions that we included in our analyses. We examined the impact of topic interest on people’s perceptions of poetry, and their ratings of their early experiences with it.

Table 4. Responses to Questions About Poetry by Respondents with Different Levels of Topic Interest (Unweighted)

Percentage of Respondents Who Answered “Yes” to Key Questions About Poetry					
	High	Medium	Low	None	Total
When you first read poetry, what type of poetry did you read?					
Classics	59.6	52.0	57.1	52.1	55.9
Contemporary**	47.7	46.1	42.0	30.0	42.6
Have you read poetry in . . .					
Anthologies**	59.1	47.4	43.3	34.1	49.8
Collected poems by an individual poet**	79.3	68.2	61.5	45.9	68.3
Have you used the Internet to . . .					
Find, read, or listen to poetry**	39.3	17.9	7.1	8.1	24.2
Find information about poetry-related events**	15.5	7.1	3.0	1.3	9.2
In the past five years, have you purchased . . .					
Books or magazines of poetry either for yourself or for someone else**	55.0	30.4	16.8	10.1	34.7

** Chi-square significant at $p < .01$

To measure perceptions of poetry, we asked all respondents to listen to a series of 13 statements about poetry and indicate whether they thought each statement was always, usually, sometimes, or never true. These questions, placed near the beginning of the questionnaire, were intended to draw out people’s top-of-mind reactions to poetry. Six of the statements were positive, such as, “Poetry keeps your mind sharp,” and “Poems help you understand yourself.” Five of the statements were negative, such as, “Poetry is boring,” and “Poetry is a waste of time.” Two of the statements were

neutral: “When you read a poem, you like to talk to somebody about it,” and “You like to be alone when you read poetry.”

The distribution of responses to these statements was also in the expected direction. The high-interest group was more likely than the lower-interest groups to agree “always” or “usually” with positive statements about poetry. The high-interest group was also more likely to select “never true” in response to negative statements about poetry. Figure 1 depicts the average percentage of respondents at each interest level who selected “always” “usually” “sometimes” and “never” across six positive statements about poetry. Figure 2 shows the distribution across five negative statements about poetry.

Figure 1

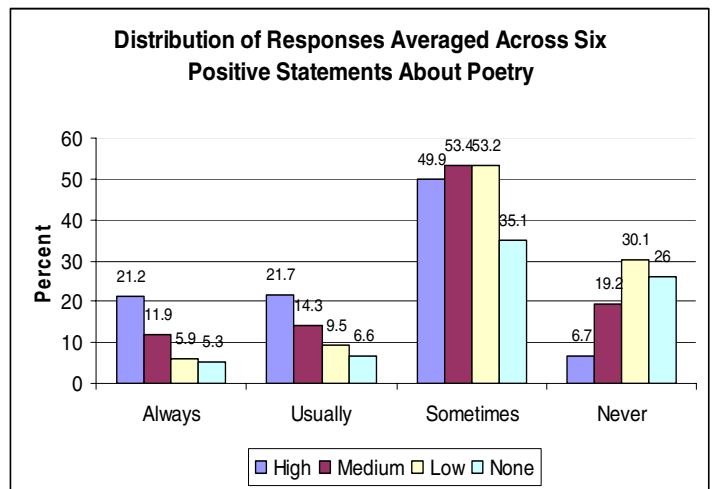
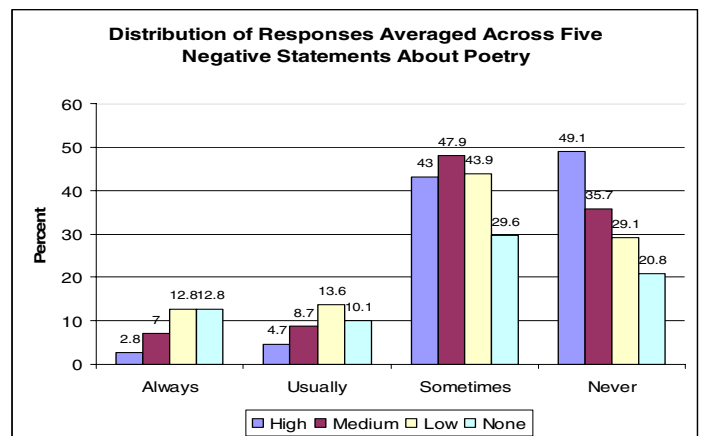


Figure 2



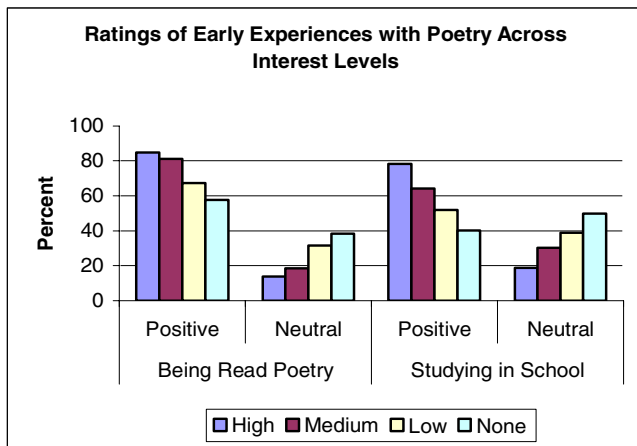
Nursery rhymes and books like those by Dr. Seuss may be considered poetry suitable for young children. We asked all respondents whether an adult or other child had read these types of poetry to them when they were young. We also asked whether they had been read other types of poetry. All respondents who had been read poetry—nursery rhymes, Dr. Seuss, or any other type—were asked to rate that experience

as “mostly positive,” “mostly negative,” or “neutral.” Overall, 77 percent of all adult readers had been read nursery rhymes or books like Dr. Seuss, and 45 percent had been read other types of poetry. Of these respondents, 77 percent rated their experiences being read poetry as “mostly positive.”

We also asked all respondents about studying poetry in school, whether in elementary, junior high, high school, or college. Eighty percent had studied poetry in school, most at the high school level (87 percent). All respondents who had studied poetry in school were asked to rate that experience. Sixty-eight percent rated their in-school experience with poetry as “mostly positive,” 5 percent rated it as “mostly negative,” and 27 percent rated it as “neutral.”

While very few respondents rated either of their early experiences as “mostly negative,” the proportion of respondents who selected “mostly positive” or “neutral” varied with their level of interest in poetry. Eighty-five percent of the respondents in the high-interest group rated their experiences with having poetry read to them as “mostly positive,” and 78 percent rated their experiences studying poetry in school as “mostly positive.” In comparison, 58 percent of the no-interest group rated being read poetry as “mostly positive,” and 40 percent thought their in-school experiences were “mostly positive.” Fifty percent of the no-interest group rated their in-school experience as “neutral.” These findings are depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3



4. Discussion

In general, we found modest support for leverage salience theory. People with higher levels of interest in poetry participated at higher rates in a study about poetry, although cooperation rates across interest levels were not significantly different. Because demographic characteristics as well as responses to behavioral and opinion questions varied with interest level, attempting to counterbalance topic salience was especially important in this study. However, the use of monetary incentives as a counterbalance proved ineffective. While incentives increased participation at all interest levels,

the percentage gain in cooperation rates from pre- to post-incentive was greatest among the high-interest group.

4.1 Implementation of Incentive Offer

The most likely explanation for this finding is that our implementation of the incentive offer diminished the potential counterbalancing effects. As noted above, interviewers were unaware of sample members’ interest in poetry at the time the incentive offer was made. In addition, interviewers were instructed to offer incentives to all reluctant respondents. At the time that incentive program was implemented, we simultaneously implemented a quota system that terminated interviews with sample members who screened in as poetry readers (high- and medium-interest group) in all replicates released *after* the quota system was activated. At the same time, pending cases from replicates released prior to implementing the quota system remained active. Because all cases within a replicate must be subject to the same procedures, we continued to interview poetry readers from the early replicates even if they were completed after the quota system was activated. As a result, it was possible for poetry readers (members of the high- and medium-level interest groups) to receive monetary incentives.

We expected to offer incentives to a small number of reluctant sample members from replicates that had been released before the quota was activated, and to a larger number of cases from the later replicates in which we were interviewing predominantly people with low levels of interest in poetry.

In actuality, far more incentives were paid to respondents from the early (pre-quota) replicates than the later (post-quota) ones. Of the 229 cases that received incentive payments, 202 (88 percent) were reluctant respondents from the early replicates. This occurred for two reasons. First, cases from early replicates that were still active during the post-incentive phase of production tended to have long call histories attached to them, information that interviewers could rely on to indicate that a sample member was reluctant. Second, at a debriefing, interviewers explained that whenever possible, they attempted to gain cooperation without offering an incentive. As a result, all new cases introduced after the quota system was activated were more likely to be attempted without an incentive offer. Offers of monetary compensation for participation were made only if the sample member seemed disinclined to participate.

Despite the limitations of implementation, there is some evidence that incentives encouraged participation among low-interest groups. A higher proportion of low- and no-interest respondents from the early replicates were paid incentives (44 and 31 percent, respectively). In comparison, only 17 percent of the high-interest respondents, and 13 percent of the medium-interest respondents from early replicates, received incentives. Therefore, while overall cooperation rates remained higher among sample members with high levels of interest in poetry, monetary incentives did bolster participation among sample members with lower levels of interest.

4.2 Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion

While it seems likely that our implementation of the incentive program is responsible for our somewhat surprising findings, an alternative explanation is plausible. Groves and colleagues (2004) posit that leverage salience theory is consistent with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Briefly, ELM takes into account factors of motivation and ability in determining the extent to which people will engage in elaborative processing of a persuasive message. Messages with personal relevance are assumed to undergo greater elaboration; decisions based on greater elaboration result in more stable behaviors. Thus, ELM would predict that when topic salience is high, sample members would engage in elaborative processing and would be more likely to participate in the study. In comparison, under conditions that promote low levels of elaboration (e.g., time constraints, distractions, lack of personal relevance), people engage in heuristic processing and are more susceptible to surface characteristics of the message (e.g., the reputability of the organization conducting the research, the personal characteristics or persuasiveness of interviewers, the presence of monetary incentives).

Under conditions of moderate elaboration, people may be prompted to listen to all arguments before making a decision. Hence, the strength of the arguments presented is likely to affect the persuasiveness of the message. If the arguments are strong, sample members will engage in greater elaboration and will be more likely to be persuaded by the message. If the arguments are weak, however, more thought (i.e., greater elaboration) will undermine persuasion.

Thus, a second possible explanation of our findings is that when we changed the introduction to the survey to minimize the salience of the study topic, we also changed sample members' level of processing. For sample members with interest in poetry, the revised introduction may have provided too little information for them to determine the personal relevance of the message, effectively changing their level of processing from greater to moderate levels of elaboration. Our pre-incentive cooperation rates, which were comparable across interest levels, provide some support for this hypothesis.

Under conditions that promote moderate elaboration, sample members are expected to slow down in their thinking and wait to hear additional arguments before making a decision. The likely outcome of this "wait-and-see" approach is that interviewers will offer an incentive along with other reasons to participate in the study. Based on the strength of the arguments and the addition of personal gain, sample members with interest in poetry would be more likely to be persuaded to participate. For sample members with little or no interest in poetry, the revised introduction would not be expected to change their already low level of processing.

One other finding from this study warrants further discussion. The study relied on a quota system to ensure adequate representation by people at all interest levels. We wish to

highlight the importance of this design decision. If we had not set cell quotas and instead kept all cases, we would have stopped interviewing as soon as we reached our target of 1,000 completed interviews with about 750 poetry readers and 250 non-readers of poetry. We would have required considerably less sample, would have finished weeks earlier, and would have achieved a higher response rate. However, we would have obtained only 250 interviews with people who never have or have not recently read poetry. The resulting study would have captured the attitudes and experiences of poetry readers, but would have failed to reflect the views of those with little or no interest in this art form. Given the Poetry Foundation's mission to understand the role of poetry in our culture and expand its audience, it was critical that we hear from this very segment of the adult reader population.

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6. Author's Note

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